



# The Green Clan

## Cheerful Farewell to Vernon Dempsey

Article by Luke Terry, Director

Vernon Dempsey, Environmental Specialist, has decided to pursue further education in Geographic Information Systems at the University of Arizona in Tucson, AZ. Vernon is married with three young children. He has been with the Kickapoo Environmental Office since January 2009. “During his employment for the KTIK, Vernon has been a solid leader and has always demonstrated a very hard work ethic” said Luke Terry, Environmental Director. Vernon has been a fundamental part of building up many of the environmental programs the Tribe has today. His last day in the office will be December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012 so stop by and wish him off. We all wish him the best of luck at his future endeavors!



## Turning Eyesores into Community Spaces

Article by Mike Kelley, Brownfields Coordinator

A brownfield is a property that is vacant, abandoned, or underutilized, due—in no small part—to concerns about potential contamination.



One of the main things that brownfield funding is used for is the assessment and cleanup of potentially contaminated land. Using funding received from USEPA, the tribe can turn old eyesores into something the entire community can enjoy. One possible use for funding is the renovation of old lands into a community garden.

A few of the concerns that people have about the fruits and vegetables they buy include: the amount of fertilizers and pesticides used, where it was grown, and how it was transported to the place of purchase. Each of these things can greatly affect the environment in which we live. Very few people want to be exposed to harsh chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The further away your produce was shipped from, increases the amount of fossil fuels burned to get it there. Growing your own food locally will cut down on these often forgotten about impacts to the environment.

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Community!***

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## Community Spaces Cont'd...

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### Some of the benefits of community gardening are:

- 1) They provide access to traditional produce or nutritionally rich foods that may otherwise be unavailable in our area
- 2) Local agriculture conserves resources by shortening the commodity chain, saving on fuel, transportation, and packaging
- 3) A community gardens can serve as an outdoor classroom where youth can learn valuable skills, like those involving practical math, communication, responsibility and cooperation. They also provide the opportunity to learn about the importance of community, stewardship and environmental responsibility
- 4) Eating locally produced food has been shown to reduce asthma rates, because children are able to consume manageable amounts of local pollen and develop immunities.

***The Brownfield Program Coordinator wants to hear your ideas, thoughts and concerns about a community garden. Mike Kelley can be reached at: 785-486-2601 x6.***

## An Introduction From Our New Wetlands Coordinator

By Matt Bosworth, Wetlands Coordinator

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I would like to introduce myself as the new Wetlands Coordinator for the Tribe. My name is Matt Bosworth. I grew up 6 miles south of Sabetha, KS and attended Sabetha High. As of last spring, I am a proud graduate of Kansas State University (Go Cats!) where I majored in Wildlife Biology. I am an avid hunter and fisherman and I love to share this passion by introducing people to the outdoors as a way of preserving our natural resources.

The goal of the Wetlands Program is to improve the water quality within reservation boundaries by focusing on the Tribe's wetland resources—areas that support both water and land animals and plants. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas. They provide an incredibly diverse habitat for plants and animals. These areas can have a huge impact on downstream water quality as they filter out sediment and other contaminants such as nitrogen, phosphorous, and even mercury as water that passes through them. Another major benefit that wetlands provide is water storage. During flood conditions these areas can drastically reduce the damage inflicted by floods by retaining a large amount of water and releasing it over longer periods of time. They also act as a buffer in years of drought—like this past summer—when rainfall is short, wetlands “bottle up” the little water that does fall and slowly discharges it into local streams and recharging groundwater supplies, providing drinking and irrigation water over a long period of time.

I look forward to working for the Tribe. If you have any questions concerning wetlands, feel free to call me: (785) 486-2601 x5.

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